

Landmark Legislation Backed by Rep. Wilson Also Includes Funding for Troops

WASHINGTON, D.C. – President Bush today signed into law legislation backed by Rep. Charlie Wilson (OH-6) that includes funding for troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, an extension of unemployment benefits and a landmark expansion of the GI Bill of Rights. “Our courageous war veterans deserve the best we can give them,” Wilson said. “Since World War II, our nation has offered college assistance to returning vets. It’s a good program for our veterans, and frankly it’s been good for the country. For every dollar we have invested in GI education, we’ve generated seven dollars – that’s a great return on our investment. But with education prices continuing to skyrocket, we had to update the program and this bill ensures that our returning veterans will have excellent educational opportunities. I’m pleased the president signed this landmark legislation into law.”

More than 53,450 from Ohio have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan. The old program paid only about 70-percent of a public college education and 30-percent of a private college education for these veterans. The expanded GI Bill restores full, four-year college scholarships to veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars to help make them part of an economic recovery like the veterans of World War II. The legislation also allows veterans to transfer those benefits to family members.

The Supplemental Appropriations bill also includes provisions that provide a 13 week extension of unemployment benefits for those workers who are unable to find a job in today’s struggling economy.

“Families are hurting. Ohio has lost 1,320 jobs each month for the past six months,” Wilson said. “Extending unemployment benefits just makes common sense. The Congressional Budget Office says extending unemployment benefits is one of the quickest, most cost-effective ways to stimulate the economy because the money is spent quickly.”

The legislation signed into law today also includes \$161.8 billion to support the cost of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through the summer of 2009.